



H.Res. 430 – Calling for Iran to immediately release three dual American-Iranian citizens currently being held unjustly

Floor Situation

H.Res. 430 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) on May 22, 2007. This legislation was reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, by voice vote on May 23, 2007.

H.Res. 430 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on June 5, 2007.

**Note: Committee Republicans expect H.Res. 430 to be called up as amended with new language including 2 additional dual citizens of the U.S. and Iran that were arrested in May of 2007, and are currently being held against their will.*

Summary

H.Res. 430 resolves that Iran should immediately and unconditionally release dual Iranian-American citizens Dr. Haleh Esfandiari, Ms. Parnaz Azima, and a third unnamed individual also being detained against their will, replace their lost travel documents, cease their tactics of harassment, and permit them to leave Iran.

Background

Dr. Haleh Esfandiari is a dual citizen of the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran who has been imprisoned by the Iranian government, and is being held against her will. Dr. Esfandiari taught Persian language and literature for many years at Princeton University and is currently a resident of the State of Maryland and the Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC.

Dr. Esfandiari frequently travels to Iran to visit family and in December 2006, on her return to the airport during her last visit to Iran, Dr. Esfandiari was robbed by 3 masked, knife-wielding men, who stole her travel documents, luggage, and other effects. When Dr. Esfandiari attempted to obtain replacement travel documents in Iran, she was invited to an interview by a representative of the Ministry of Intelligence of Iran. Dr. Esfandiari was interrogated by the Ministry of Intelligence extensively.

Lee Hamilton, former United States Representative and President of the Wilson Center, has written to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to call his attention to Dr. Esfandiari's dire situation. On May 7, 2007, Dr. Esfandiari was summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence and taken immediately to Evin prison, where she is currently being held. Iranian television reported on May 21, 2007, that the Iranian Government has formally charged Dr. Esfandiari with "seeking to topple the ruling Islamic establishment."

Ms. Parnaz Azima is also dual citizen of the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran who has been imprisoned by the Iranian government, and is being held against her will. Ms. Azima is a journalist for Radio Farda, whose passport was confiscated by the Iranian government in January of 2007. Ms. Azima was interrogated by Iranian intelligence and was told that she would have to be detained for two years or more.

A third dual American-Iranian citizen, who has chosen to remain anonymous, was also denied her passport and is being detained against her will in Iran.

Cost

This legislation has not been scored by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

Staff Contact

For questions or further information contact Matt Lakin at (202) 226-2302.